



# News Release

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## **National *Salmonella* illness outbreak linked to turtles**

*Reptiles and amphibians carry Salmonella: parents urged to teach safe handling*

**OLYMPIA** —A national outbreak of *Salmonella* illness has been linked to contact with turtles.

Although Washington is not among the 27 states with cases tied to the outbreak, the state Department of Health urges parents to teach kids how to more safely handle turtles and other reptiles and amphibians.

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) is investigating five [multi-state outbreaks](#) of salmonellosis linked to exposure to turtles. At least 124 people, including 19 who required hospitalization, have been affected.

Snakes, lizards, frogs, and toads commonly carry *Salmonella* bacteria, even if the animals appear healthy. Their droppings can contain the bacteria, and people who handle the animals or touch their environments can be exposed. Young children are at highest risk for becoming ill because they're less likely to wash their hands and they touch their mouths more often. Young children are also more likely to have more serious health consequences from salmonellosis. Turtles and amphibians should be kept out of homes, childcare settings, schools, and other places where there are children under 5 years old.

Both federal and [state law](#) ban the sale of small turtles with shells less than four inches long, and pet stores and other turtle vendors are required to give written information to buyers about disease risks. People who see small turtles for sale should not buy them, and should report such sales to the Department of Health at 877-485-7316. Our [Salmonella from Reptiles and Amphibians](#) webpage has more information, and check out the [Department of Health website](#) ([doh.wa.gov](http://doh.wa.gov)), your source for *a healthy dose of information*. Also, [find us on Facebook](#) and [follow us on Twitter](#).

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